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ABSTRACT

"Options in Education" is a radio news program which focuses on issues and developments in education. This transcript contains discussions of federal money for colleges and universities; the high school proficiency test in California; the writing problems of college students; letters from listeners about schooling and jobs; the Arts Impact program in Columbus, Ohio; and women in education, including facts about Martha Washington and nonsexist classroom techniques. Participants in the program include John Merrow and Wendy Blair, moderators; Harold Howe II, of the Ford Foundation; reporters Rose Tobin, Gary Gottschalk, and Jennifer Alt; Gloria Rapinchuk; Merle Levine; and Janice Earle. (JM)

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INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

TRANSCRIPT FOR PROGRAM SCHEDULED FOR BROADCAST

THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 9

National Public Radio

Options in Education

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CS 203 012

OPTIONS IN EDUCATION is an electronic weekly magazine devoted to coverage of news, features, policy & people in the field of education. The program is available for broadcast to the 181 member stations of National Public Radio.

Executive Producer is John Merrow, Producer is Midge Hart, Co-Host is Wendy Blair, Reporter is David Ensor.

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(MUSIC)

BLAIR: I'm Wendy Blair with NPR's OPTIONS IN EDUCATION.

(MUSIC)

OPTIONS IN EDUCATION is a news magazine about all the issues and developments in education -- from the ABC's of primary education to the alphabet soup of government programs. If you've ever been to school, we have something that will interest you.

On this edition of OPTIONS IN EDUCATION, you'll hear about problems that college students are having with writing.

RAPINCHUK: . . "The people are influenced by our society to believe that death is the accumulation of things that are best". And I quote. Well, I don't know how he could have said that. Apparently, he wasn't writing anything he was thinking. I don't know what other explanation you can get from such a statement.

MERROW: I'm John Merrow. You'll also hear about one teacher's efforts to liberate women in history.

REPORTER: Tell me everything you know about Martha Washington?

CHILD: I don't know anything about him. I haven't heard about him. Martha Washington? Well, he was a good cook, and . . . .

BLAIR: And we'll read more letters from listeners about our series on schooling and jobs.

(MUSIC)

CHILD: It was Will Rogers who said, "The schools aren't what they used to be - and they never were."

MERROW: One of the things that school is now and never was before is an industry - a $100 billion big business. Educators, as a tribe, are increasingly upset about the unwieldy strings which are often attached to Federal money. Forms and red tape plague high school principals, school superintendents and college presidents alike.

BLAIR: Last week, representatives of over 150 colleges and universities met in Baltimore to discuss ways to cope with the future - a future which undoubtedly will be even more complex than the present. We asked Clint Coleman of member-station WBJC to attend this first National Conference on College and University Planning, which was sponsored by the Phelps-Stokes Fund.

Former U.S. Commissioner of Education Harold Howe II, now Vice President for Education at the Ford Foundation, zeroed in on the obstacles the Federal government puts in the path of planning.

HOWE: "There is not wide-scale coordination of those multiple activities that impact institutions. The fact is that nobody in the United States government which delivers - I don't know - somewhere around 25% of the money which supports higher education in this country -- people in the government are worried about their own particular little programs. (The agricultural guys are worried about their's - the defense guys are worried about their's - the Office of Education guy is worried about the piece of the action they have.) And, again, each year you have an annual budgetary process which the amount of money each year for those things goes up and down in the so-called planning of the individual bureaucrat who may be responsible for that element of the program. Or even the political plans of persons in Congress who necessarily have to get elected, and sometimes use the changes they make in the higher education programs more for the purposes of getting elected than for purposes of benefiting the institutions."

COLEMAN: Howe says the only suggestion he can offer to alleviate this problem would be for the Federal government to let the institutions know in advance what it will allocate to them for the next five years - so that planning officers can plan on, or around, that figure.

For OPTIONS IN EDUCATION, I'm Clint Coleman.

MERROW: Educators, like Yale's Kingman Brewster, are saying that Washington creates chaos because it is, itself, chaotic. One example may make a point about Federal regulations and directives. In 1972, the U.S. Office of Education published 32 official documents in the Federal Register. Four years later, in 1976, the number of official notices and regulations is expected to reach 270.

(MUSIC)

REPORTER: What do you like best about school?

CHILD: I like to do work.

REPORTER: You like to do work. What don't you like about school?

CHILD: (sigh) That's all I want to say. That's all I want to say.

REPORTER: That's all you want to say.

BLAIR: Work. Or the fact that sometimes the school prevents them from working is precisely what a lot of teen-agers don't like about school. For many of them, school is a drag, and for others, personal problems or their family's financial

straits may make school a virtual prison. For these students, dropping-out before education may be the only option, a step taken by 24% each year. Well, one state now offers a positive alternative. Rosemary Tobin reports.

TOBIN: California is the first state to provide a high school proficiency test. Twelve-thousand students signed up to take the exam, and those who pass will receive a certificate of proficiency. With parental permission, a student who earns a certificate may leave high school at the age of 16. Legislation by State Senator Arlan Gregorio created the test.

GREGORIO: In the way high schools are funded today in California, at least the financial interest is in keeping the child in the classroom for four years so you can get the money for the fact that his body is there. And this puts an emphasis, really, where it ought not to be. The emphasis of the test is: Is the student learning the basic things that he's going to need if he's going to be an effective, functioning adult in our society? So, the real purpose of the test is to let students go on when they've acquired those basic skills -- whether it takes them two years, four years or something in between.

Just the fact that there is an examination available - that there is a way for kids to move on to some place else, if they feel that what's going on in the high school is not relevant to their needs anymore, means that the high school is going to have to reshape its attitude.

TOBIN: Senator Gregorio feels the test gives students another choice. For some, the test may be a last chance. John Gilroy of the California Department of Education helped write both the legislation and the test itself.

GILROY: If you have a student who's been a marginal attender for a long time - he's way down on grades and units - he may frequently be in trouble. He says to himself kind of - and you have to be real about this - he just can't make it that way. He can't stay out of trouble long enough to succeed in school. So, what we said to this student is -- Don't drop out. Here is a test. It's a very basic test. There are no tricks in it. It's not an easy test. If you'll just learn enough to pass this test before you give up all together, we'll give you a piece of paper that you do know that much. And that piece of paper will, #1, legally get you out with your parent's consent, and also, it will be useful in applying for a job because it says that you're functionally literate. It doesn't guarantee much, but what it does guarantee, it guarantees absolutely.

TOBIN: Ralph Cower is principal of George Washington High School in San Francisco. During our interview, Mr. Cower described some of the test items.

COWER: One of the items would be, for example, to write a letter or paragraph indicating you wanted to order something from a mail-order house, and they would give you certain givens, and then you, from those givens, you would compose a letter.

Another one might be to write a letter in relation to applying for a position and certain things that would have to be, and, again, they would give you givens. In the mathematical type questions, there were questions in relation to fractions, volume of things - or they showed a graphic illustration of a cup filled partially with a fluid -- Is it a half, 30% or 20% - and this type of thing. These were the kinds of things that some of the sample questions indicated.

TOBIN: The certificate is a legal diploma. A student can use it to apply at colleges or universities, or to apply for a job. For higher education, the transcript (a record of a student's grades and credits) is as important as the diploma itself. Senator Gregorio feels colleges won't discriminate against certificate holders with good transcripts. John Gilroy feels employers will prefer a certificate.

GILROY: A diploma can be awarded for four years of sitting quietly. In San Francisco, for example, I have been told some of the trades unions require that for students to get into their apprenticeship programs they take what is known as the GED (General Education Development Test), which is a test which has been around a long time, and show that they've passed that. Whether or not they have a local diploma. Because the unions have learned, sadly, that a local diploma does not necessarily mean that the student can even read.

Now, I don't mean to single out San Francisco. I don't think they're unique in this respect. It's something that is fairly wide-spread. We gather it's nationwide.

TOBIN: Principal Cower favors four years of high school and a diploma.

COWER: I think the proficiency test gives them an equivalency certificate, which to my mind is not the same as a high school diploma. It's an "equivalency" so-called. But I think there is a certain interaction between teacher and student in the classroom where they tend to pick up things that they're not going to get by just taking a test which says they are proficient in certain areas. I think if a student can do some of those that I have seen, it will show that he can perform certain arithmetical functions, to write a certain type of paragraph or sentence and this sort of thing, but whether he has the full benefits of the full education he would receive from being in a classroom with a teacher is another thing in my mind.

TOBIN: On the day of the test, I talked with some of the students and asked them why they wanted to take it.

STUDENT: Just to get out. I don't want to have to stick around.

TOBIN: Doesn't school interest you anymore?

STUDENT: Nope. Not one bit.

TOBIN: Do you think you'll pass?

STUDENT: Yeah. I think so.

TOBIN: What about your parents? You need your parent's permission to get out of school.

STUDENT: Oh, I have no problem at all. They're glad because, like, right now I don't go all the time. They'd just as soon me take the test and get out, and be free to go on and do what I want to do.

STUDENT: Well, the reason I am is because - so I can get out of school. Because, for one, I work. And I'm too many credits behind - so, I figure if I pass it,

next September I'll go to City College and become a stewardess.

STUDENT: Because school's a bore, and I want to get out, and go to college, and get a job.

TOBIN: Is school really that bad?

STUDENT: Yeah, especially where we go.

STUDENT: Well, I figure I've learned what they had to taught me - especially where I go to school. I've learned about all they've got to teach.

TOBIN: Funding for California public schools is based upon average daily attendance. It's guessed that about half the students who pass the first test will leave school. Not a large number, but Senator Gregorio hopes the prospect of lower attendance will make high schools more responsive to students' needs.

GREGORIO: The point is that many high schools, unfortunately, today don't give the kids who are bright and who have acquired these basic skills the kinds of other educational experiences that are really relevant to their needs. And, so what we do by creating this mechanism for them to leave is to make the high school rethink their own programs -- so that they either meet these kids' needs, or else these kids may leave.

TOBIN: For National Public Radio, I'm Rose Tobin in San Francisco.

BLAIR: Sooner or later, everybody criticizes the schools. After all, everybody has been through a school system of one kind or another, and this common experience makes us all experts to some degree. And, of course, our tax dollars support the school system.

One complaint about schools is that they tend to be a leveling or homogenizing experience, treating the slow learner and the extremely gifted as if they were both average.

MERROW: In May, OPTIONS IN EDUCATION will be doing a series on "Education for the Gifted Child". And we'd like to begin now by inviting your comments on the question of education for the gifted. So, help us shape our report on this complicated question of -- How to deal with children whose gifts and talents seem to set them apart from the rest of us? How can you help? Give us your views on the question in general - or tell us about your own experiences or about programs that you may know about.

BLAIR: Send your comments to National Public Radio - Education, Washington, D. C. 20036. Let me give that address again: National Public Radio - Education, Washington, D. C. 20036.

MERROW: Many of you might find it difficult to be concerned about the gifted child when there is so much to worry about across the board. Much has been made of the persistent decline in scores on national standardized tests, and this next report on college students who can't write a simple, English sentence won't make you feel much better.

Gloria Rapinchuk, who directs the Learning Resource Center at the University of Northern Iowa, illustrates the problem for Jennifer Alt of member-station KHKE-KUNI in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

RAPINCHUK: "Vocational programs will help gap the space for the student who find little or no interest in these areas." And that student was just chronically careless, and probably until he got a referral to our clinic, nobody had ever said to him, "Hey! You can't do that." And, then, finally somebody said it to him, and he still hasn't in fact, demonstrated competency, but at least he's aware that he's got to do it, or he can't be a graduate of this university.

Now, I have some other samples, if we have a minute. This was written by a junior, and this is the beginning of a paragraph, and I will - when I come to the end of a sentence, I'll read period because there's such a long run-on sentence in the middle that you would think that he had four or five sentences there, unless I read it this way. So, he wrote: "If I was asked, or had the chance to do it differently, I would choose not to because I felt that our organization was a well-balanced, thoroughly unified system with well-defined functions and goals. I thought that we were all satisfied with how the systems operated, the 'rewardifications', that is, benefiting from the learning experience of the inner and outer conflicts of running an organization, how to give direction to the members of the group. how to organize control and plan." And so on. That was it. And he was referred by a faculty member, but, as I remember, the student was really angry because he thought he was a good writer.

ALT: That's what I wanted to ask you. Isn't there a great deal of anger in these students when they find out that they must have remedial help?

RAPINCHUK: Most of those are angry when they're first referred. A few will stay angry and resist all the way, but most of them will finally tell one of the tutors - and they're all very supportive tutors -- "You know, this has been a problem all my life. I just really never did write much in high school. Now, I'm in college, and I haven't had as good grades as I want; haven't written much." And, finally, when they're confronted with it and they know they just really have to do something about writing, they're relieved and grateful when they finish.

ALT: Why does something like this happen? Why does a senior or a junior end up in a college with that kind of a level of writing ability?

RAPINCHUK: It's very possible that a student who comes to college has never done any writing in high school. I mean any, not any. Or he may have done some very little bit of informal writing. But, because there are so many electives in a high school program, and there are so many attractive electives, it's very likely that a student could go through four years of high school and never take a course that is going to require him to write. So, he gets to the university. Now, I think most universities have a compulsory composition requirement. Our's does not. A student may elect to take composition

or not. So, we have a special problem. But say he's one of these problem cases, and he knows that writing is difficult. You know, it is hard work for everybody. And he tries to avoid the problem - like he did in high school. He may run into a professor that assigns a paper, and, in effect, never reads it. Because I have seen some perfectly abominable pieces of writing, and they say at the bottom: "Good work. B+". Or, "I like your ideas, A-" -- and then finally, some teacher reports him as being deficient at writing, and we have to say, "Hey! This is terrible work." And he says, "What do you mean? I got A on that one, and B on that one." Well, all you can infer is the professor didn't read the paper. Okay, that's one possibility.

Other problems are that -- I talked to a high school teacher last week-end from a little town in Southeast Iowa, and she said, "Are you having a lot more problems with Freshmen who can't read at the college level?" I said, "Well, I'm not really too sure about reading, but I know about writing. I'm sure that's true." And she said, "Well, you know, I find" - she'd been out of teaching for two years, and then came back to the high school classroom - "I find that students are just weaker generally at all verbal skills." And she thought they were much more passive, and, of course, attributed this to watching a lot of television, and not having much verbal interchange in the home. And, so, that's a reason you see given very often. The culprit is television.

Well, that can be one factor, but it certainly is not all of it. One of the most important groups in the English field - that is, especially teachers of writing - Conference of College Composition & Communication - there has been a resolution which has been debated for about four or five years as to whether or not the student has the right to his own language. Well, that resolution passed that group, which is, as I say, a prestigious group among English teachers that teach writing. Well, with that kind of principle in the background, what is turned out in the high schools - or even in some college freshmen courses - practically anything that the student writes is acceptable. The emphasis is on so much individualization that they forget about a community standard, which is, of course, standard English.

ALT: Is writing proficiency needed anymore in our society? Maybe we've come to the place where good writing isn't necessary. Do you find anyone outside the academic world really cares?

RAPINCHUK: Yes. In fact, you find more agreement outside the academic world than you find inside. We have some very important people in, say, the National Council of Teachers of English who say, "It really isn't important anymore whether they write standard English or not. But if you want to talk to people in the business community, or in the professions, I think it's very important."

I just picked up from a friend of mine a report from Iowa State University, which was done by Professor Lillian Feinberg and Elizabeth Buckles, and they surveyed 32 businesses - some of them national and some of them Iowan, and some of them small businesses, I expect. They asked what kind of communication skills were needed by people entering these businesses and they were consistent. I mean, you can look at the responses from all 32, and they just say over and over again - "It is essential that college graduates that we hire be able to write, communicate, speak - but fluently." They want them to be able

to think on their feet. And that's not something you get without some practice. In business, at least, communication skills are absolutely necessary, and that's, of course, a good talking point for us when we work with a student - especially in business. We say, "Well, if you think that you're going to go up the heirarchy in business, you know very well that you're going to need these skills."

MERROW: Gloria Rapinchuk, Director of the Learning Resource Center at the University of Northern Iowa, talking with Jennifer Alt of station KHKE-KUNI in Cedar Falls. Mrs. Rapinchuk pointed to three problems: Insufficient emphasis on writing in school, teachers who aren't reading what their students are writing, and the relaxed linguistic standard that approves of students speaking their own language - just as they "do their own thing".

BLAIR: Anyway, we do know that many businessmen are not happy with the help they're hiring fresh out of school, and they tend to blame the schools and students. Laying aside the question of who is to blame for the moment, it's true that success in the work-place requires the learning of basic skills.

We've just completed a series on the relationship of the schoolhouse to the work-place, and our mail indicates that you, our listeners, thought a lot about this problem. Your letters are just too good, and too interesting, to keep to ourselves. So, we would like to read a few more now. We're even getting letters about the letters.

MERROW: Let's start with that category, Wendy. Gordon Hershey of Bloomington, Indiana says that the listeners' letters persuaded him American education needs mandatory training at the junior and senior high school levels in skills which are both vocational and avocational. In other words, we all ought to learn skills well enough to earn a living, if necessary, even though we might only use the skills for relaxation or personal benefit. Mr. Hershey writes, "I don't think one needs limit these vocation/avocation skills to such distant skills as cabinet-making or weaving or pottery. Auto mechanics for college-bound men and women provides the same kind of potentially useful skill while creating a back-up opportunity for employment."

BLAIR: We're getting letters from lots of teachers, and just about as many from former teachers. Apparently, there are quite a few teachers like me who drop out - not just students. Paul Gumm of Falls Church, Virginia writes, "As a former teacher, I'm astounded and revolted by the current relationships between the broad educational establishment on the one hand, and the other institutions in our society on the other."

I feel that school tensions relate directly to the broader issues and problems of our society. And I see far too few efforts to ameliorate the situation. I see instead a society paralyzed by fear and refusal to recognize change. A society, which - with few exceptions - denies creativity and abhors compassion. My personal response to this is to buy a farm in a small, loving, rural community and move my family into the hills this spring."

MERROW: Not all teachers are dropping out, Wendy. James Quay, who teaches English at the University of California in Berkeley, asked us for 16 sets of transcripts for his students. He writes, "My students are in desperate need for this kind of information."

BLAIR: Speaking of students, a young woman* from Bowling Green, Ohio, writes persuasively about the irrelevance of her own college education. She writes, "While I find much of my student-teaching experience in a community school for the mentally retarded to be challenging and invigorating, there's a catch. Weekly, my luckless peers and I must spend one afternoon as the captive audience for our 'supervisor'. He calls the session a 'seminar'. For fear of tarnishing my precious professional reputation, I cannot tell you what I call it."

MERROW: Our letters reinforce the bad news about the job market for those with advanced degrees. We're getting a lot of letters from unemployed Ph.D's and others who cannot find work that fits their advanced professional degrees.

Bill Kelly-Fleming of San Diego, California writes, "I had eight years of higher education, including a Master's Degree, and I am now unemployed. I do not feel my eight years were a total waste though."

BLAIR: And Jean Wyllys of Austin, Texas writes, "I hold a M. A. from Oxford University and began my working life in the British Foreign Service. I am currently occupying the position of larvae-keeper in a genetics lab. I suppose this is some kind of comment on what education fits one for. She adds that between those two jobs she changed countries, got married and raised four children. Now, she's working again as a larvae keeper while her husband is back in school again. When she finishes, she intends to get a teaching certificate and teach high school.

MERROW: Not everyone has her faith in the educational system, however. Ginger Forester of Fargo, North Dakota writes, after having had 11 quarters of university study, "My husband and I are both working in a hospital. He, as a cook, and I, as a housekeeping aide. We realized that the educational system was stifling our education. We can definitely identify with Art Buchwald's comment about reading Kierkegaard and Simone de Beauvoir, too, on our coffee breaks."

BLAIR: The idea about breaking the lock-step that requires people to go to school when young, and then work for 40 years, turned on quite a few listeners.

S. Jaramillo, also of Fargo, North Dakota, responded, "What a wonderful idea that each person be given a 12-year ticket for education -- to be used when convenient or desirable for the holder."

MERROW: That system might help a lot of people through the career crises that seem to happen to everyone. David O'Grady of Palo Alto, California says he is at that point right now.

*Name withheld by request.

"At 23 years of age," he writes, "with a B.A. in Psychology and a couple years of work experience in the field, I find myself in a career crisis. I simply cannot tell anymore what it is I want to do with my life."

BLAIR: It's clear from our letters that there are a lot of people out there who want the ways of the world changed. One listener in Brookline, Massachusetts -- we can't give his name because he's running for the School Board -- writes: "Although we have a nationally recognized school system it is not satisfying the need to know what the real world is about. This knowledge used to be handed down in the family. Any educational and social movement which fails to recognize the importance of family stability will not succeed - since the mechanism of transmission, the family, has not been involved."

MERROW: And Bill Satoris of Seattle, Washington writes along the same lines: "Something has to change, and I hope it's soon. And education is one means in school and out in the real world. It's all only just us, and when we change, it will all change."

BLAIR: Those letters were in response to our series on schooling and jobs. And if you missed the series and would like a transcript of the four parts, they're free. One set to a listener. Send your request to us at National Public Radio - Education, Washington, D. C. 20036.

(MUSIC)

BLAIR: Not all the news from and about schools is bad or depressing. Last week, you heard a report on "creative play-acting" as a way of motivating students.

Now, we have another bit of happy news from Gary Gottschalk of WCBE, Columbus, Ohio, who reports on an innovative approach to learning about the arts.

> CHILD: You just don't sit around in a class being all . . . while -- "It's real interesting, teacher." But you can get out and really discover more. It isn't boring. It's fun! You don't have to be bored to learn. You can have fun while learning.

GOTTSCHALK: And fun while learning is the intent of the Arts Impact Program, created by the Columbus, Ohio Public Schools - a program designed to remedy classroom boredom. You heard a candid opinion from a 5th grader involved in the project - where the goal is to motivate pupils while entwining the daily curriculum with the fine arts of dance, music, art and drama.

> CHILD: We make things and discover more things than we can just one regular class. It's a learning period. You can really get out and do what you want to do. Or get just as much learning out of this Impact as you do out of reading and writing.

TEACHER: The more you expose a child to, the better their vocabulary is going to become - and they'll be more self-confident. And I think self-confidence is very important in a child's career. I can definitely see just with my group this year, and I just got them in September -- they were very lax in their control. Now, I can trust them. Because they're so interested in what they're doing.

GOTTSCHALK: Speaking with fifth-grade teacher, Ruth Anne Bennett about her students involved in the Arts Impact Program. It's not that other schools don't offer drama, art, music and dance in their curriculum. Many do. But Arts Impact differs in that the instructors of these arts are now involved in planning the teaching methods.

Art instructor Pat Hawthorne is one such person working to help teachers teach.

HAWTHORNE: Say the teacher is trying to teach sets to children. And, working with sets and new math with some kids, it is difficult - as far as art and a visual form, visual arts. You can teach sets by having kids work with groups of things: blocks, concrete items, having them take things in the room, compose with sets, design them on a sheet of paper. And working with them that way, the kids - rather than seeing numbers in a book - one set of two, two sets of three - the children build with them, work with them, they get more excited. And they begin to understand what the abstract figures in the book mean. They begin to work things out.

And I think that if you motivate children toward an idea and maybe they're working out visually - they're working out in creative dramatics or movement or music - they want to finish it, or to explore it further. And they realize that they need extra knowledge to do that, and they begin to sit down and learn to read more. I think a lot of people think that the only way children learn is by teachers sitting in front of the room and verbalizing; that that is teaching. But I think too much in structured educational sets that the teachers never give the children a chance to learn. They just teach. They're always verbalizing. You need to give kids time. I think that's what Arts Impact does. They key to getting children to work is to make them want to; to motivate them. And that's what the arts can do. Through dance, drama or music, the kids can get excited. They get a picture in their mind, or a sound, a visual form of a drama (where they want to act something out) -- and in art, really, do you ever find a child who doesn't want to do something? He becomes so motivated and excited that it carries back into his curriculum learning, and I think this really comes off. The kids really begin to enjoy learning.

GOTTSCHALK: Art instructor Pat Hawthorne speaking about the Arts Impact Program in 12 of the Columbus, Ohio schools. This is Gary Gottschalk in Columbus, Ohio for NPR, National Public Radio.

MERROW: Okay, I'd like you to tell me everything you know about George Washington.

CHILD: Well, one thing, he was sick all his life. And George Washington - he lived at Mt. Vernon. And it was a big plantation by the Potomac River. And he married Martha Washington. I forgot her maiden name. Now, it would be Martha Washington. And that's that!

MERROW: What did he do before he became President?

CHILD: He chopped down a cherry tree.

MERROW: What about that?

CHILD: The cherry tree? It was a big cherry tree and it had big cherries like that, and then his mother said - George, who cut down the cherry tree? And he said - Me, mother. And then his father took him in there and put him over his lap, Che-topw! And he was prosecuted.

MERROW: Okay. Now, tell me everything you know about Martha Washington.

CHILD: I think she married him, and became his wife. Yeah. And she was the First Wife's President - that's all I know about her.

CHILD: Well, George Washington was the one who crossed the Delaware. He was one of them that wrote the Bill of Rights, or something like that. The Constitution. That's all I know.

MERROW: Tell me everything you know about Martha Washington.

CHILD: I don't know anything about him. I've never head of him.

CHILD: Martha Washington? Well, she was a good cook, and now she is buried in Mt. Vernon next to George. I think she's on the left side of George.

(MUSIC)

BLAIR: Just what kids are learning in school is the concern of Merle Levine, a teacher at the Weatly School in Old Westbury, New York. She tells John Merrow about a curriculum she's developed for teaching history in a non-sexist way.

LEVINE: Well, the first thing I did with students was to set them to work looking at the very textbooks that they had had throughout their experience at Weatly High School, and they were to look for who are the women in the indexes, and then to look them up and to see how they were written about. And the very first mind-blowing thing was that there were hardly any women, and they became pretty indignant about that. But even more so - when you look up the ways in which women are talked about in the history texts.

For instance, one of the tasks I set them to was to look not only in the textbooks but in the history books in our whole library, and to try to find out what it was that historians said

about Martha Washington. Well, it turns out that ten of the texts that are used in the regular history courses don't say anything about her. She doesn't exist. And in one text that's used widely throughout the country, the only reference to her -- it talks about how aggravated she was when there was a grease stain on her wallpaper.

MERROW: You're kidding!

LEVINE: No, I'm not kidding, and it was so pejorative that it had - when I did the original research myself - it set me to trying to find what was Martha Washington really like.

And you see, when you actually can find material on her what a nasty job on her historians had done. Poor Old Martha. Because she turns out to be a very decent, warm-hearted woman. The person who people around George Washington were more apt to talk to because they found him so formidable. That she had been with George Washington on all of the campaigns - at least spent the winters with him at his request.

MERROW: Not at Valley Forge.

LEVINE: Yes, at Valley Forge, everywhere. And she said she heard the opening and the closing cannon of every campaign. And I don't know why she's been maligned like that, or why the view of her has been so distorted.

But once students got a look at that, that opened up all the possibilities for looking at -- Well, how has the rest of history been distorted? For instance, one of the things in the book that I wrote asked students to check off out of a whole list of possible occupations which ones they thought colonial women would be involved in. And the list included things like bakers, butchers and blacksmiths, and lawyers, doctors and so forth. And they'd check off those they think are reasonable for women.

Well, actually, the whole list are occupations that colonial women were involved in. And, then, too, we're faced with the homily that "a woman's place is in the home". And when we look at the colonial experience, we see - Yes, of course, her place was in the home, but the home was where everything was taking place.

MERROW: When we started, you said one of your tasks was to try to make students receptive. What happened? Did the students get turned on?

LEVINE: It was in a way fun. Half of the students were boys. And they came in saying -- I don't want Women's History. I thought this was a course on the Bicentennial, on American History. And I would say, "Yes, it's true. Except - as I wrote it up, it said it was going to deal with women's history, and if you want, you can change out to another course." And then they'd say - Oh, well, I guess I'll stay.

And I find out of the two kinds of things - the content and the teaching strategies - which had students constantly making connections between what the histories were telling them and what they could see around themselves in the society,

and understanding their own roles and what their society's values seem to be - or what they seem to be receiving as messages. They began, then, to explore everywhere they went, and I'm still hearing from students who are still exploring.

One girl, who was a twin, came into class once absolutely furious. And she said, "Do you realize all this time that I'm the one who's had to make everybody's bed? Mine and my twin brother's? And it's not fair." Then she went on. She's quite a fantastic athlete, and both she and her brother were spectacular athletes, but he was able to get an athletic scholarship, and she wasn't. She began to raise the whole question of -- Why couldn't girls have athletic scholarships?

She also brought up for other girls in the school the whole question of women in athletics and the ways in which she had been downgraded as a human being, and as a girl because she's interested in sports.

MERROW: You know, all of this is very helpful, and it's nice to hear this kind of thing. But it seems as if maybe you're swimming against the tide, or trying to stop the tide from coming in - some kind of hopeless task - if those ten textbooks you mentioned earlier, which don't mention Martha Washington, if those are still being used. And if the textbook publishers haven't changed their ways?

LEVINE: Well, I both agree with you and I disagree. It depends upon how optimistic I'm feeling any particular day. Yes, it's true. The textbooks are still being used. It's also true that however innovative and creative a teacher is that at some point you do have to rely on texts. And, at this point, the only thing I was able to do was to train the students to be aware for themselves, and to analyze materials they're using.

The saddest evidence comes from the whole period of Black history where there was for a while a tremendous pressure to do research and to include Black history, and, yet, now we don't see it in the texts - unless sometimes it's added on in a little paragraph or a chapter. But it's not an intrinsic part of the teaching, and I think that's a travesty; that we're not a democratic society so long as we only present one part of the history of our people, and that we perpetuate the racism, the sexism, the classism that does exist.

The other thing is: If we can't change the textbooks as fast as we'd like, it'd be nice to change the teachers' heads. And I have been involved with the feminist press in preparing in-service courses for teachers and training teachers to teach in-service courses and in teaching them. And it's absolutely essential.

Teachers do think that they're being equitable. They are absolutely astounded when you can develop ways to show them that they are actually biased, and that if teachers are aware, then you can play around with any text. You can have students analyze. And, then, it doesn't become as crucial.

So, we really need to do both things. We need new materials, new texts, and we need new heads in teachers.

MERROW: Now, isn't there a danger that women historians in revising - or, as you would say, correcting - history are going to go overboard the other way, and pretty soon we'll have history textbooks that show George & Martha, hand-in-hand at the prow of the boat crossing the Delaware River?

LEVINE: I don't think that's a real danger, but I think it's an absolutely marvelous possibility.

BLAIR: Merle Levine, who's raising her students' consciousness and also hopes to change a few teachers' heads as well. How to go about that last task is the concern of Janice Earle of the Resource Center on Sex Role Education in Washington - and Barbara Schornborn of the Governor's Office of Manpower & Human Development in Illinois. They were in town recently to help plan for a National Conference on Women in Education, a conference we'll be covering in late spring. First, we hear from Barbara Schornborn.

SCHORNBORN: If you find people stereotyping persons on the basis of their sex, it usually is not relevant or important to an educational activity - that people are of one sex or another. And, yet, in our classrooms and teacher training activities, we do classify people and treat people according to what sex they are.

MERROW: Tell me what other kinds of things I should look for if I go sit in on my daughter's classroom in terms of behavior that stereotypes her as a girl?

SCHORNBORN: I think one thing you can look for is whether the teacher separates children simply on the basis of sex for no reason. The girls line up here -- Boys, help me with this. This is certainly one thing that tells you right away the mind set of the person who's operating in that classroom.

MERROW: How would you do it? By height?

SCHORNBORN: Have her do it randomly. Ten children, come here. Ten more children, go there. Whenever children are separated as a group, solely on the basis of sex, I think it points up the difference that isn't relevant.

EARLE: I remember I one time came up with a whole list of things that teachers could use to divide children whenever the teacher maybe needed half of the children to be one place and half another place, and I thought it was very clever because it would include lots of concept building. For instance, I want the tallest - half the children who are taller, or the ones who weigh the most, or the ones with the blue eyes, and the ones with the brown eyes to do different things because this would help with body image and self concept and it would also help children to learn that - Maybe I'm in the shortest group, but I'm also in the oldest group in the class.

However, when you consider that a teacher has many, many things to attend to during a day, it's understandable why it's so easy to just say - Boys, on this side of me. Girls, on this side of me. And then we'll go to the playground. And the task of changing people's thoughts so the question of sex roles identification is very high in their priorities, it's a big task. Because they're asked to do all kinds of things during the day.

The other thing that is separating on the basis of sex in the classroom is that it prohibits or reinforces the fact that after about the age of four, girls and boys stop playing together, and I think this is unfortunate for both. My daughter came up to me the other day - she's in Kindergarten - and she said, "Mommy, it was girls' day in the Block Corner." Well, her teacher had obviously been making an effort to at least get the girls into the Block Corner - but here she was separating them on the basis of sex. To what good I cannot imagine!

MERROW: I'm sure you're giving her credit for trying.

EARLE: I'm giving her credit for trying.

MERROW: What kinds of things do teachers do that they shouldn't do.

EARLE: Well, most studies that have dealt with teacher behavior have showed that teachers differentially treat boys and girls - particularly in relation to aggressive behavior (this is one that came up in our task force meeting.). Teachers seem to enforce aggressive behavior in boys.

MERROW: When you say aggressive behavior, what do you mean?

EARLE: We're talking about hitting, ignoring directions. Problem behavior in many ways. Whereas when girls exhibit this kind of behavior, it tends to be ignored, and, therefore, not reinforced. And, along with that, girls tend to be rewarded with teacher attention when they are physically proximal, nearby to the teacher. And when they exhibit more dependent, clinging kinds of behaviors. So, the teachers are reinforcing in each case the extremes of behavior that already exist.

MERROW: Teachers are helping little girls to grow up to be dependent and helping little boys to grow up to be independent. Barbara?

SCHORNBORN: Your suggestion that we're only concerned about the classroom which suggests the front line of education is too narrow. We're also concerned with the ways that teacher educators behave, and the kinds of resources they bring to the training of teachers - both before teachers go into the classrooms as pre-service teachers and when they come back for extra teaching refresher courses in the universities.

Teacher educators are very far behind some of the other groups in our society in thinking about sex role behavior and sex role identification.

MERROW: Janice?

EARLE: I just wanted to say that most - or a good deal - of sexual stereotyping occur before children ever get to school. Before the age of three, in fact. So that no one can blame teachers for perpetrating it. However, they are a group that one can reach. You can't obviously go out and reach every single parent. It's easier to work through schools of education and school systems, and say -- "This is what you're doing. This is how it's harming children, and these are some things you can do to change or intervene."

MERROW: Okay. So, it ought to be easy to solve the problem then. What happens when you intervene with teachers and show them that they're guilty of this kind of behavior.

EARLE: They tend to deny that they're producing that behavior.

MERROW: And then what?

EARLE: Well, I think this is part of the problem - the denial. People don't like to think that they are stereotyping - that they're prejudicing - or that their behavior is prejudiced in any way. So, I think that - as we were discussing in our task force - we need a lot of research to document exactly what is going on. We've had some, but we need more. And ways have to be found to show people - first, make people aware of their behavior, and then show them how they can change it.

MERROW: How can we change it? I'm a teacher. How can I change the behavior that's reinforcing girls to be one kind of thing, and boys to be another?

SCHORNBORN: Probably brainstorm with you and suggest some things you can do. For example, if you were teaching high school classes, and you were teaching a book called "Giants in the Earth", which is about a family out in the Midwest frontier, I might suggest that in addition to the usual themes that you would pull out of that book to discuss with the children, that you might also spend some time talking about the family members, and what the wife and the family does - what little girls do, what little boys do - and the husband in the family. This would be one cognitive way or mental process way that you and the children would explore the way we interpret literature in our society.

At an earlier age, nursery rhymes and fairy tales are used in the classrooms in elementary school - early years especially, and I might suggest to you that you have the children re-write the nursery rhymes. What is the one about -- Tom, Tom, the piper's son, stole a pig and away he run. This is about a bad boy, and we might re-write it so you have an equally naughty girl. Or about "Mistress Mary, quite contrary" - just compare the two, and say, "Are girls always contrary, and what does that word mean? And are boys always nasty and stealing and running away and things like that?"

MERROW: Maybe -- "Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet, eating her curds and whey. Along came a spider and sat down beside her - and she beat it to death with her spoon". Okay.

EARLE: That's one on Sesame Street. "Little Miss Muffett sat on her tuffet eating her crunchy granola . . ." I always liked that.

MERROW: So, you would change the behavior by re-writing nursery rhymes?

EARLE: Well, it's by taking a very careful look at all the instructional materials in the classroom and checking them for bias. This is not only textbooks, but what are called trade books (children's literature books), other kinds of materials. When we talk about career development, frequently all you find are pictures of doctors who are men, and nurses who are women. It's very easy to - not easy - but materials can be found which show people in more non-traditional jobs and non-traditional roles, and where possible, these should be made available so that children could see some options.

MERROW: Well - all right. Go ahead, Barbara.

SCHORNBORN: Teachers will introduce toys to pre-school children in a sex role stereotyped way. If they have sewing buttons they'll introduce this to the children by saying, "This is what Mommy does when she sews on a button at home." And the girls come around her to learn to do this and the boys leave and go to do something else. And when they introduce a fishing set - a little, magnetic fishing set - they actually call on boys to try it out. And they make it very clear that it's something that boys do. Just a way to reverse that would be to have the teachers very carefully equalize the sex of the children they call and for the various sex typed toys, and interesting and pessimistically, the researcher who has worked on this says that as soon as the teacher stops doing that reverse or nonstereotyped behavior, the children go right back to the stereotypes, too.

So, what probably is needed is long-term intervention over a child's whole school life.

MERROW: But I'm interested in the question of changing teachers' behavior. Could you expect to do it if you just work on the new teachers every year? There aren't that many. And most of the new teachers coming out of Ed School aren't getting teaching jobs. They're doing something else. You know, the entry/exit percentage each year is roughly 8%. You have to work with the teachers who are now in the classroom, and how do you get to them?

EARLE: This is why in-service is so important, and why it's such a necessary route for the dissemination of information materials.

MERROW: Are you optimistic that in-service education - that taking summer courses or night-time courses once a week can change the habits of people who have been teaching ten, fifteen years?

EARLE: Well, I'm not sure what can change their habits. But clearly, these people must be reached, and this is one way of intervening. Another, of course, is through the schools of education. Schools of education are not only training teachers, but they're producing continuing education programs, seminars, conferences, even alumni meetings. Things of this type. And in all of these ways, people can at least become aware of some of the literature and what it says.

MERROW: That sounds like a drop-in-the-bucket.

EARLE: It is a drop in the bucket.

MERROW: What about the rest of the bucket? What are the forces that are perpetuating the sex role stereotyping?

EARLE: Well, I think it goes all the way across-the-board. Children's literature perpetuates it. Teacher behavior perpetuates it. Television perpetuates it. Movies, toys. It just goes all the way, and each thing has to be dealt with.

BLAIR: Janice Earle and Barbara Schornborn talking about sex role stereotyping inside and outside the school. Radio is not on that list. Maybe it should be.

(MUSIC)

MERROW: Next week we'll continue our focus on "Women in Education" with a look at how they do in mathematics.

BLAIR: Material for this program was provided by member stations WBJC, Baltimore and WCBE, Columbus, Ohio and KHKE-KUNI, Cedar Falls, Iowa, and Rosemary Tobin in San Francisco.

MERROW: A transcript to this program is available for 25¢. A cassette costs $4.00, and, please, don't forget to send us your ideas for education for the gifted and talented.

BLAIR: Our address for transcripts and your ideas is National Public Radio - Education, Washington, D. C. 20036.

MERROW: Now, here's David Ensor with the Education News Highlights.

ENSOR: Children in Rochester, New Hampshire have been saying The Lord's Prayer in school every morning for almost four weeks now. That may sound unconstitutional to you, but the State Legislature and Governor say it's not, and plan to take a test case to the Supreme Court. The new state law they introduced nine months ago treats the prayer as part of New Hampshire's pilgrim heritage. It requires each classroom teacher to explain that before the children recite the prayer. Last week,

the courts took up the challenge. U.S. District Court Judge Hugh Bownes issued a permanent injunction against recitation of the prayer, citing the Supreme Court's 1963 ruling that school prayers violate the Constitution's guarantee of Church and State. The action came as a result of a suit by the New Hampshire Civil Liberties Union on behalf of 12 parents.

Wisconsin Senator William Proxmire has a staffer who spends his full time hunting down and publicizing government "boondoggles" - places where Proxmire's office thinks our tax money is being wasted. The Pentagon is a frequent victim of the lawmaker's wrath, but last week it was the turn of the Office of Education. Proxmire says a contract they gave out wasted over $2 million.

PROXMIRE: It was just an outrageous situation in which the Office of Education just grossly mismanaged what they called a "management improvement contract". To such a degree that North American Rockwell was able to bilk the government, the American taxpayer, out of over $2 million. The contract monitoring contract was supposed to last only 9 months and cost $378,000. Before it was stopped, North American Rockwell which had thought up the idea in the first place, stretched out its study - and it was a meaningless study - for almost five years, increased the cost almost 500%.

Here are some of the facts on it. #1, the North American Rockwell Corporation first approached the Office of Education with this idea in 1969. Rockwell said it would design a computer system which would enable the Office of Education a better check to work with its contractors. Then, the Office proceeded to give Rockwell a $378,000, 9-month, cost-plus contract to perform the work without ever asking another firm to bid for the contract. They just gave it to them.

The Office of Education and Rockwell agreed to 16 modifications of the original contract which resulted in the project taking six times as long, and costing more than 5 times as much as first intended.

MERROW: How does something like that happen, Senator? Wasn't somebody watching?

PROXMIRE: Well, obviously, they weren't watching carefully enough. They thought it would work out. But they got nothing from this thing. They have nothing they can really use. Because after 57 months they finally cut off the contract - and that was in June, 1973 - and even though the material developed by Rockwell was found to be useless, not one penny, not a cent, was returned by the contractor to the Office of Education.

ENSOR: Democratic Senator William Proxmire speaking with John Merrow. An Office of Education official told Newsletter Education Daily the Rockwell computer monitoring system was dropped in 1973 because it didn't work. It did some things, but overall it wasn't an effective system.

Some time ago, we reported that a drop out from Louisiana's Tulane University had twice gained admission to the prestigious Harvard University Law School using two different names and two false undergraduate transcripts. They caught him the first time, and he was simply thrown out. The second time he was caught it was more serious. Spiro Pavlovich or Jason Scott Cord, as he called himself, was arrested for concealing a Federally-insured student loan he got from Harvard the first time as Pavlovich while applying the second time under the assumed name of Jason Cord.

Now, it turns out, there is a Mrs. Pavlovich, who allegedly pulled the same trick on Harvard Business School. Mrs. Pavlovich, who posed as a Radcliffe graduate, called herself Cary Cabot at Harvard. Monette Pavlovich was arrested by the FBI late last month and charged with giving false information on an application form for a Federally-insured student loan.

So, the question puzzling Harvard Admissions officers is obvious. Though the answer is not. How did the Pavlovich's produce such perfect fake transcripts from Tulane and Radcliffe complete with the embossed seals of the college registrars?

With News in Education, I'm David Ensor.

(MUSIC)

BLAIR: This program is produced by Midge Hart, the Executive Producer of OPTIONS IN EDUCATION is John Merrow. I'm Wendy Blair.

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CHILD: This is NPR, National Public Radio.